

# FOCUS ON THE FIRST

## MONTHLY CONSTITUENT NEWSLETTER

COUNCILMAN CHRIS FORD—1ST COUNCIL DISTRICT  
LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

VOLUME II, ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 2014 / JANUARY 2015

### GRATZ PARK FOUNTAIN RESTORATION PROJECT



The Gratz Park Neighborhood Association and the Division of Parks and Recreation will utilize the upcoming winter months to make long awaited progress on a special community project.

The Gratz Park Fountain Restoration project will replace the utility infrastructure associated with the fountain located in the northern area of Gratz Park. The declining condition of the fountain & utilities has become a managerial challenge and burden for the Division of Parks & Recreation. The improvements to operational efficiency include electrical, plumbing & pumping systems, as well as structural foundation reconstruction.

The restoration of the fountain has functional & historical significance, as the fountain is nearly 80 years old. The construction of the fountain was a gift to the youth of Lexington, from nationally acclaimed writer & Lexington native James Lane Allen. The Gratz Park Neighborhood Association has raised a significant sum in private contributions to be dedicated to this project. In addition and in support of the project, Council approved \$150,000 from the FY14 Budget toward the restoration costs.

After several administrative delays associated with bidding requirements, the restoration of the sculpture has begun. In late November, the sculpture was removed to an off-site location and is scheduled to return once the project is complete in late spring 2015.

### CHARLES YOUNG CENTER NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

In 2011, I was fortunate to lead a citizen-based task force in advocacy of redeveloping the Charles Young Center. With Council approval, the Department of General Services and the Division of Grants & Special Programs led renovations which culminated in re-opening of the center in fall 2012.

In the interim, the LFUCG Division of Historic Preservation has been working with our 1<sup>st</sup> District Council Office and the Kentucky Heritage Council on documenting the historical significance, both architecturally & socially, of the center. As a result, the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Board recently approved the nomination for the Charles Young Center to be added to the *National Register of Historic Places*.

If given final approval by the US Department of Interior, this will indeed be a high honor for the facility which has stood proudly at 540 East Third Street for nearly 80 years. I commend Ms. Bettie Kerr & Mr. Randy Shipp of our local Historic Preservation Office for their resource & dedication to this process. We anticipate official notification from Washington, DC in spring 2015!



Chris Ford  
Councilman, 1st District

### DECEMBER / JANUARY CALENDAR:

12/10-1/12—Council Winter Recess

12/25—Christmas Day (LFUCG Offices Closed 24th & 25th)

1/1—New Year's Day (LFUCG Offices Closed)

1/4—Inauguration 2:30 PM (Lexington Convention Center, Bluegrass Ballroom)

1/13—Council back in session

1/19—Martin Luther King Jr. Day (LFUCG Offices Closed)

1/20—Mayor's State of the City  
Address 11:30 AM (Hyatt Regency, Patterson Ballroom)

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## POLICE CHIEF PROMOTED TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSIONER



*Chief Ronnie Bastin*

Mayor Jim Gray recently promoted and Urban County Council confirmed Police Chief Ronnie Bastin as Lexington's new Public Safety Commissioner. Bastin, a 30-year veteran of Lexington's Division of Police, was named Chief on Jan. 7, 2008, by then Mayor Jim Newberry.

As Public Safety Commissioner, Bastin will lead the City's Divisions of Police, Fire Emergency Services, Enhanced 911, Emergency Management and Community Corrections.

I congratulate Chief Bastin on his promotion to Commissioner's Office. As a Council Member, I've been fortunate to have a direct line of communication and working partnership with Chief Bastin and the Police Department. I am confident he will transfer this proven leadership to his administrative role in the Department of Public Safety.

Bastin's new role will create a vacancy in the role of Chief of Police. The mayor, who will appoint a new Chief, has formed a search committee, tasked with making recommendations to the Mayor. We anticipate the committee's recommendation and the Mayor's appointment very soon.

## LEXTRAN HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX GROUNDBREAKING

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, Lextran General Manager Rocky Burke led ground-breaking of its new Headquarters Facility Complex at 200 W. Loudon Avenue. The project will enable Lextran to relocate from its current site at 109 W. Loudon, just across North Broadway, to the former the GE Lighting Kentucky Glass Plant site.

This project is designed for Lextran to consolidate all of its administrative, operational and maintenance functions to a centralized site. The nearly 14 acre property will include space to accommodate Lextran's 187 employees and fleet of over 70 buses. The project is funded partially with a grant from the Federal Transit Administration of nearly \$11 million. Project completion is expected in spring 2016.

Lastly, the groundbreaking was the final official ceremony for Rocky Burke at Lextran. He will soon begin a new role as General Manager of the Sarasota County (Fla.) Area Transit. Good luck Rocky & thanks for leading Lextran to the construction phase of this transformative project.



Rocky Burke (Lextran GM), Mayor Jim Gray & Councilman Ford



Lextran executives and LFUCG officials turning dirt at the groundbreaking

## COUNCIL APPROVES MIDLAND AVENUE TIF DISTRICT



Midland Avenue TIF District boundary

The Urban County Council recently gave final approval for the establishment of the Midland Avenue Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. The Midland Avenue TIF is projected to further spur economic development associated with new mixed-use retail & housing development in the East End and downtown areas.

A portion, or increment, of the additional tax revenue to be generated within the boundaries of the TIF District may be recaptured by the project development team for reimbursement of public infrastructure costs benefitting the project area.

Proposed infrastructure includes traffic and streetscape improvements, utility relocation and park amenity enhancements. With local approval by LFUCG now secured, the Midland TIF will undergo further review for final approval by state Economic Development officials.

The Community Ventures Corporation is a lead partner in the Midland TIF. In addition, a new public parking garage is slated for construction at the intersection of East Main & East Vine (at the western boundary of the district).

## INTRODUCING NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS AT-LARGE

The Urban County Council will be led by a new team of Council Members At-Large beginning January 2015. Each Council Member will bring valuable local government experience to their new roles.

*Council Member Kay* is currently completing his first term as an At-Large Member. He will succeed retiring *Vice Mayor Linda Gorton* as the leader of the Urban County Council.

*Council Member Stinnett* has represented the 6<sup>th</sup> District for the past 10 years, and will now serve constituents citywide.

*Council Member – elect Moloney* has previously represented the 11<sup>th</sup> Council District for several terms, and has also served as the city's Chief Administrative Officer.

The At-Large Council Members will serve a term of 4 years, ending in December 2018. I look forward to partnering with our new Vice Mayor & At-Large Council Members in addressing the needs of our city, including areas throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> District. Please join me in welcoming them back to Council.



Vice Mayor-Elect  
Steve Kay



Council Member  
At Large-Elect  
Kevin Stinnett



Council Member  
At Large-Elect  
Richard Moloney



Council Retirees & Mayor Jim Gray (L-R): CM Harry Clarke, CM Julian Beard, Vice Mayor Linda Gorton, CM George Myers and CM Chuck Ellinger

## FAREWELL TO COUNCIL RETIREES

When I arrived as a member of the Urban County Council in January 2011, Council Member Steve Kay and I were the only newcomers. Since then, a total of 9 of my colleagues will have retired from Council, including 6 who will say farewell later this month. On behalf of the 1<sup>st</sup> Council District, I extend best wishes to these public servants, and thank each for their exemplary service to Lexington.

## FORMER 1ST DISTRICT COUNCILMAN PREPARES FOR NEW ROLE AS STATE REPRESENTATIVE



Representative-Elect  
George A. Brown, Jr.

A face very familiar with our local government will soon begin a new role in state government. *George A. Brown, Jr.* was recently elected as State Representative for Kentucky's 77<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. He will succeed Rep. Jesse Crenshaw, who is retiring after 22 years at the State Capitol.

During a long public service career in Lexington, Brown served 13 years as 1<sup>st</sup> District Councilman, from 1994-2006.

Representative-elect Brown will join his 99 colleagues in the Kentucky House of Representatives in taking an Oath of Office on Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at the State Capitol. Please join me in wishing Rep. Brown a smooth transition to state government & a productive 2015 Legislative Session.



Rep. Brown & Councilman Ford





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Councilman Chris Ford

## UPCOMING CITY GOVERNMENT EVENTS

### Inaugural of the Mayor & Urban County Council

Sunday, January 4, 2015

2:30 PM

Lexington Convention Center, Bluegrass Ballroom

FREE & OPEN to the public (Free Parking)



Oath of Office, 2011 Inauguration

### Mayor's State of the City Address & Luncheon

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

11:30 AM

Hyatt Regency Lexington (downtown), Patterson Ballroom

\$35 Lexington Forum Members

\$40 Non-Members

To Register for Address/Luncheon: Lexington Forum at 272-7888

## SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE 1ST DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICE!

